

# His Uniqueness

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*Christ's uniqueness and universality make Him the answer to all human needs and the restorer of true unity in a new creation.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:45

**Topics:** "Unity in Christ", "The Uniqueness of Christ"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the uniqueness of Christ as the last Adam, who embodies the fullness of heaven and meets the diverse needs of humanity. He explains that knowing Christ is not merely about understanding His earthly life but recognizing His spiritual significance and how He transforms us into a new creation. Sparks highlights that Christ is not confined to any one culture or temperament; rather, He is a universal figure who comprehensively addresses the needs of all people. The sermon calls for a deeper revelation of Christ through the Holy Spirit, which leads to true unity among believers as they are conformed to His image. Ultimately, Sparks encourages the congregation to see Christ as the answer to every human need and the one who restores unity in the new creation.

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## Transcript

"So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam... a life-giving spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:45,47).

"Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh: even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more. Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:16-17).

I am returning to our previous meditation in relation to the incarnation and life on earth of the Lord Jesus as representative of the new creation. Let us at the outset understand Paul aright. When he said 'Henceforth we know Christ no more after the flesh' he did not dismiss the incarnation and the earthly life as being of no value and meaning. He meant that we no longer take account of Jesus of Nazareth simply as a man, or as a prophet, or (as many believed) as an impostor: as a man who had come into the limelight, made great claims, done many things difficult to understand and said many things which were extraordinary, and then had been taken by the Jews and delivered up and crucified: knowing Christ after the flesh, as we might know any other man. You notice that the immediate connection is with knowing people just as they are naturally on the earth, and Paul says that neither other men nor Christ do we henceforth know on that level. The other, and positive, side is that our knowing now of one another and of

Christ is in the new creation, their place and meaning there - that is the realm in which we take note, recognise and appreciate, that is the thing with which we are occupied. I have sought to make that perfectly clear, because, to go back and dwell much upon the incarnation and earthly life of the Lord Jesus might otherwise look like a contradiction. Some might think that that is knowing Christ after the flesh, and that is the very thing we are seeking not to do, even while we dwell upon His earthly life. What we are really seeking at this time is that knowing of Christ - even in His earthly life - after the Spirit, getting through to the inner significance and meaning of Christ, and by coming into vital contact with the Divine, the heavenly, the spiritual, the eternal meaning, find a registration upon ourselves - what we have called an impact, a challenge, and the setting up of something to which we have to be adjusted and conformed.

But added to that, let me say this, that, when the Apostle speaks in his letter to the Romans about our being predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29), he is not referring to some image which Christ entered into when He went into heaven. Perhaps because we have not thought about this carefully, we have a way of thinking of Christ in heaven as altogether different from Christ on earth, and that we are conformed to that Christ in heaven, and not to this Christ on earth. I want to correct that. The Christ in heaven, glorified, is only the glorifying of the Man Who was here, or the glorifying of that which was true of Him here, taking it up into glory and establishing it there in the presence of God, attested and sealed with glory. It is the perfection of what was here. He was perfected through sufferings, and the arriving at a position of fulness (which is the word 'perfection', completeness) brought the seal of God in glory. It is not another Christ in glory, it is the same One - the Man in the glory, perfected and glorified - and it is that nature, that disposition, that conduct of His which were here on the earth, with all their features and characteristics, which are taken up into glory and established there. We are to be conformed to Christ as He was here inwardly, so that we also share His glory when perfected together with Him at the end. We have not to try and study a Christ of a mentality up there, but to get, by the Spirit, to the inside of the Christ Who was here, and as He was here: not the imitation of Christ according to Thomas a Kempis (that is mysticism, asceticism) but the inward revelation of Christ to our hearts, according to the hymn that we often sing - that which results in extinguishing our tapers because the sun has risen, the discarding of our winter garments because the summer has come, the smashing of our idols because He has filled the heart. That must become the spiritual experience, and progressively so. So we come to all that is recorded about Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man, and ask the Holy Spirit to teach and to show us Christ from the inside. If the Holy Spirit does give us an insight into the Lord Jesus as He moved on this earth, there will be a tremendous effect upon our lives and a tremendous challenge. It will be the Spirit's method of conforming us to the image of God's Son.

#### A Universal, Collective Person

Therefore we must begin by recognising the uniqueness of the Son of Man; everything begins there. When we use that word 'unique' we are always tempted to violate the laws of English grammar. You find people saying that a thing is 'absolutely unique'. Here you feel you want some emphasis on that word 'unique', but it will not do. There are no degrees of uniqueness. 'Unique' is complete and final in itself. When a thing is unique there is nothing else in the universe like it, it stands alone. So we must recognise the uniqueness of the Son of Man. There never has been another Son of Man in the sense in which He was Son of Man. His uniqueness is found in this, that all that is in the thought of God, all that is heavenly in thought and conception, value and meaning, all that expansiveness of the universal which God is, is crowded down into this one Person; and as the Spirit leads you into Christ, you find that you have been led into an utterly boundless ocean, you have been lifted completely out of every kind of limitation into

what is universal. More, you have been brought into touch with that which is not of this earth at all. You cannot find its like here, you cannot find anything of its order here. It is another order, a heavenly order, crowded down into this one life. You find that Christ, the Son of Man, is not just a single Person. Yes, here He is, in a sense one, but He is a race crowded in, He is a collective Person, everything is gathered into Him. If you get your feet on the road of the revelation of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit from the inside, you will find as you move along that road that you come into the vision that the Apostle Paul had, that entrancing, enthralling, captivating vision which simply possessed Paul as he saw at length all the scattered, broken fragments of the creation gathered together and made one in Christ, the restitution of all things in Christ, all that which was divided and broken and scattered, gathered together in the new creation in Christ; and you begin to see how that can be, because here is such a comprehensive, all-embracing Person.

You know how impossible it is to put Christ down into any one of the sections of human life or of this world order and bind Him to that, and make Him the property of that alone. Can you really put Christ down into any one nation and say that He belongs to it? Yes, a Syrian by birth, but He belongs to all the nations, and all the nations have found Him just as much one of themselves, in meeting their need and answering to their hearts and challenging their conditions, as His own nation by birth. All nations shall call Him blessed. He is the desire of all nations. Can you put Him into any quarter of the earth? Take the four quarters. Take the West with its energy, its genius for getting things done. Well, what does Christ say to this active, energetic, Western world? He is not out of place here, and yet He would say something corrective to us about rest and patience. But He would not say, You must slow down in order to know rest. He would say, You can know rest in toil, in activity. Do you see what I am getting at? Christ does not say to us in this Western world, with all the fret and rush and drive and activity, All that must of necessity stop when you come to Me; but He says, You have to find the secret of rest in the midst of it all: for rest is not ceasing from doing, rest is a matter of the heart, and "you shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29). Yes, He comes in, He is not out of place here.

Or go to the East. There you have slow and pensive patience, quiet, everlasting jog-trot - hardly that. What will He do with that? He fits in perfectly. He does not say, You must become energetic, and throw off this sloth, and so on; but He also has a corrective for that world. There is a lot in the New Testament about being not slothful in business, being fervent in spirit. You do not find a great deal of fervour of spirit on that side of the world. They are very easy-going, taking things as they come; but He will speak about fervour of spirit. He fits in, He has something to say. He is no stranger.

Go to Northern climes where things are hard and rugged, serious and grim, and you will find the Lord Jesus fits in and relieves the strain and smooths the ruggedness, and you will find beauty brought in there by Him. Go to the South with its passion and heat; you find saints in the Southern climes, and by the corrective of His presence that passion is changed to true love. The Lord Jesus, you see, comprehends all, and it would be, perhaps, interesting and profitable if we were to pursue that line further.

#### The Divine Answer to Universal Human Need

What I am trying to get at is this, that He brings in the fulness of heaven in His one Person, and we find that He comprehends the race and meets the need of the whole, and challenges the condition of the whole. He is not outside of anyone as a stranger, He is a universal Christ, a heavenly Christ, there is not another like Him. Other prophets belong to certain realms and environments and constitutions, and they are suited to those; but He, the Son of Man, is unique.

But you can bring that down to smallest details. Here we are, enough to represent a fair variety of dispositions and constitutions and temperaments. There are many differences among us. In medicine, the thing which differentiates people from a certain standard of law is called an idiosyncrasy. Can you find any idiosyncrasy in Christ? You will not find one, He has not got one. He utterly conforms to standard, and yet He meets us in all our variety, in all our differentiations. Not two of us are exactly alike, but we can everyone of us say that the Lord Jesus has exactly met our need, met us not in outward things - we are not talking of temporal things - but met us as we are. Not one of us can say, He may be all right for so-and-so because their make-up and temperament is just what He suits, but He does not fit in with me. We can, if we do not already, know Christ for ourselves as exactly meeting our particular make-up; and that can be spread over millions and millions of different people, all of whom have an idiosyncrasy, something which makes them different from everyone else; the Lord Jesus perfectly meets everyone in their inner life and becomes the answer to their particular need. To know Christ after the Spirit means to know Him in this way, how He meets our particular need and becomes a living reality in our particular make-up.

Take heart, dear friends. You may think that yours is the most difficult nature that God ever had to deal with, and you may have despaired of yourself. Ah, but here is One Who comprehends all. He is not just a single Person to meet some particular kind of man or woman, He is a combination of all and yet outside all in that heavenly distinctiveness. When He was here on earth, the poor were able to say, He is one of us; arid yet He was at home as much with the rich as with the poor. There was no strain with Him, whatever circle He moved in. He was perfectly comfortable with the most learned, and with the ignorant. He embraces all. To learn Christ after the Spirit is to learn how He meets our personal need and the need of everyone.

#### The Restorer of True Unity in a New Creation

Then to recognise how He is going to gather up into Himself all the broken fragments. Is not the race a shattered, broken, scattered thing? It is all fragments. How will that new creation man, that new creation race, be one? We begin to see it is one in Christ. It is going to take His likeness, be all-inclusive. It is a mystery, difficult to present, to speak about. Do you glimpse it? There is One Who takes up all these shattered fragments in His own uniting Person on a higher level, and in His own Person makes them one, so that they are all complements of one another instead of at variance with one another. Oh, temperaments are so different, they will never get on together! Christ is of no one temperament. Tabulate the temperaments as we know them and see where you fix Him! He was not temperamental at all, He was above it. Now gather into Him in a spiritual way and partake of His nature, and you can see a single Body fitly framed together, a beautiful harmony. Do you see through the spiritual meaning of Christ? He is going to gather the scattered children of men into one. How? Not geographically, calling them together from the ends of the earth and doing it from the outside. He is going to do it by the revelation of Himself first of all to their hearts, and then the work of His Spirit upon that revelation. When that happened at the beginning, it was a beautiful token of what it will be at the end. You see it in Jerusalem in those days. Oh, the love, the harmony, the selflessness, the self-forgetting! - continuing together, calling nothing that they had their own; just a foretaste of what is going to be - of what Christ means, in fact, when first of all He is seen and then the Holy Spirit acts upon that in the heart. Well, I have only started on that. May that glimpse mean something. What we need, first of all, is to see the Lord, yes, to see Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, and then to have His Spirit at work upon that revelation to conform us to His image. We know Him no longer after the flesh. Oh, to know Him - but to know Him as He really is! The Lord give us that knowledge, and, by even

our brief and so stammering attempt at touching upon Him in His reality, stir our hearts to see that here is One in Whom is all the possibility of solving every problem, answering every question, and doing what no armies or organisations or leagues can ever do - gathering together into one: not organised oneness, but organic oneness. The Lord open our eyes!

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